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ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of activities to increase racial/ethnic and gender diversity in nursing and nursing education. Data are from a survey on gender diversity completed by 193 nursing education administrators in the 16 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states and the District of Columbia and a survey about the racial/ethnic composition of nursing students and faculty completed by 275 administrators. In 52% of the nursing education units, the racial/ethnic diversity of students increased in the last 5 years, and only 4% showed decreases in racial/ethnic diversity. The racial/ethnic makeup of faculty was unchanged in 60% of the nursing education units, but diversity increased in 29% of the programs. At the beginning of the 2000-2001 academic year, 89% of nursing students were women and 11% were men. Graduates in 2000-2001 showed similar proportions of men and women, but 35% of nursing education units reported increases in the number of male students and only 11% reported decreases. Only 5% of the nursing faculty in 2000-2001 were men, and projections suggest that this percentage will remain unchanged in the 2001-2002 academic year. Most nursing education units have recruitment partnerships with area high schools and some have recruiting partnerships with professional organizations. Few reported partnerships with youth organizations. Some ways to improve recruiting partnerships are discussed, as are methods for student and teacher recruitment and ways to increase funding. (Contains 14 tables.) (SLD)

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Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in Nursing Education

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Acknowledgments

This report provides an overview of activities to increase racial/ethnic and gender diversity in nursing and nursing education. This inventory of resources and activities in the SREB states and the District of Columbia can help nurse educators address continuing disparities in the nursing profession.

The council's governing board and I applaud the contributions of the ad hoc committee responsible for the report:

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Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in Nursing Education

The underrepresentation of racial/ethnic groups and men in nursing education perpetuates their underrepresentation in the work force. This fact compels leaders in nursing to renew and reinforce efforts to overcome barriers to the successful recruitment, retention and graduation of male students and students from various racial/ethnic groups. The barriers are not new. The Southern Regional Education Board addressed many of the challenges in grants from the Division of Nursing, Bureau of Health Professions, nearly 30 years ago — Project IODINE (1972-1975) and Faculty Development for Nurse Educators (1977-1982). In April 2000, the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (NACNEP) presented a national agenda for diversity in the nursing work force in a report to Congress and the secretary of health and human services. The NACNEP policy goals and proposed actions provide an important basis for activities at the national, regional, state and local levels.

Effective action to address the challenges of recruitment, retention and graduation requires an inventory of resources and ongoing activities. The governing board of the SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing appointed an ad hoc committee to determine the racial/ethnic and gender diversity of nursing education units[1] in the 16 SREB states[2] and the District of Columbia. The committee developed a questionnaire about the gender composition of nursing education programs, changes in the last five years, ongoing recruitment and retention activities, and available resources to support recruitment and retention activities.[3] In July 2001, 491 nursing education administrators[4] in the 16 SREB states and the District of Columbia received the questionnaire. Of those, 193 (39 percent) responded. Fifty-six percent (275 administrators) responded to a May 2001 survey about the racial/ethnic composition of nursing students and faculty.

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1 "Nursing education unit" refers to the department, division, school or college of nursing. A nursing education unit may offer one or more type of nursing education program: associate's, bachelor's, master's or doctoral.

2 The SREB states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

3 The committee purposely omitted items related to the racial/ethnic composition of students and faculty because that information was available from a May 2001 survey conducted by the SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing.

4 In this report, "nursing education administrator" refers to the nurse educator with overall responsibility for the nursing education unit (i.e., dean, director, chairperson, head).

Table 1

Geographic Distribution of Returns

State	July 2001 Survey	May 2001 Survey	NEUs*
Alabama	13	21	32
Arkansas	12	12	19
Delaware	1	3	7
Florida	21	27	47
Georgia	10	23	31
Kentucky	7	12	30
Louisiana	11	10	18
Maryland	5	7	21
Mississippi	9	14	21
North Carolina	22	30	61
Oklahoma	11	14	30
South Carolina	4	8	22
Tennessee	17	21	30
Texas	27	43	72
Virginia	12	15	30
West Virginia	11	13	16
District of Columbia	0	2	4
Total	193	275	491

* NEUs - nursing education units

This report consists of four major sections: racial/ethnic diversity; gender diversity; recruitment and retention activities; and suggestions for regional action. In this report "nursing education unit" (NEU) refers to a department, division, school or college of nursing that offers one or more types of nursing program: associate's, bachelor's, master's or doctoral.

Racial/Ethnic Diversity

Students

In 52 percent of the nursing education units the racial/ethnic diversity of students increased in the last five years; only 4 percent showed decreases. Forty-four percent of the programs reported no change.

Table 2

Change in Racial/Ethnic Composition of Students at NEUs in Five Years

State	NEUs Reporting Increased Diversity	NEU's Reporting No Change	NEUs Reporting Decreased Diversity
Alabama	5	5	2
Arkansas	4	8	0
Delaware	1	0	0
Florida	19	1	0
Georgia	5	5	0
Kentucky	1	6	0
Louisiana	2	7	1
Maryland	4	1	0
Mississippi	4	2	0
North Carolina	9	10	2
Oklahoma	4	6	1
South Carolina	2	3	0
Tennessee	7	8	1
Texas	19	8	0
Virginia	8	3	1
West Virginia	3	8	0
Total	97	81	8

Data from the May 2001 SREB survey on faculty shortage show the diversity of students in all types of nursing programs (Table 3).

Table 3 Racial/Ethnicity of Students, 2000-2001

	Associate's	Percent Students	Bachelor's	Percent Students	Master's	Percent Students	Doctoral	Percent Students	Total	Percent Students
African-American	2,228	14	4,428	19	1,106	13	52	8	7,814	16
American Indian	193	1	265	1	50	1	5	1	513	1
Asian	262	2	671	3	261	3	43	7	1,237	3
Caucasian	11,770	77	16,323	70	6,564	77	479	76	35,136	74
Latino	795	5	1,163	5	374	4	28	4	2,360	5
Other	138	1	297	1	157	2	26	4	618	1
Total*	15,386	100	23,147	100	8,512	100	633	100	47,678	100

* Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Nearly three-fourths (74 percent) of all nursing students reported in the May 2001 survey are Caucasian. African-Americans represent the next-largest group, at 16 percent. The percentages of Latinos, Asians and American Indians are 5 percent or less. This trend is true of each type of program except for doctoral, in which the percentages of African-Americans and Asians are almost equal (8 percent and 7 percent, respectively). Because graduate students become a pool for faculty recruitment, these students can affect the number and the racial/ethnic mix of future faculty in nursing education.

Faculty

The racial/ethnic makeup of faculty was unchanged in 60 percent of the nursing education units. The aggregation of data prevents a more precise interpretation of racial/ethnic diversity within the group that reported no change. The racial/ethnic diversity of faculty increased in 29 percent of the programs and decreased in 11 percent of the programs (Table 4).

Table 4

Change in Racial/Ethnic Composition of Faculty at NEUs in Five Years

State	NEUs Reporting Increased Diversity	NEU's Reporting No Change	NEUs Reporting Decreased Diversity
Alabama	3	6	3
Arkansas	3	6	2
Delaware	0	1	0
Florida	8	11	1
Georgia	4	6	0
Kentucky	2	5	0
Louisiana	3	6	1
Maryland	2	3	0
Mississippi	2	6	0
North Carolina	3	16	3
Oklahoma	2	9	0
South Carolina	0	3	1
Tennessee	4	10	2
Texas	12	12	3
Virginia	4	6	1
West Virginia	2	5	3
Total	54	111	20

Table 5

Race/Ethnicity of Nurse Educators, 2000-2001

	Nursing Faculty		Nursing Education Administrators	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
African-American	607	12.4	25	9.2
American Indian	71	1.5	3	1.1
Asian	73	1.5	2	0.7
Caucasian	4,022	82.4	237	87.5
Latino	99	2	3	1.1
Other	11	0.2	1	0.4
Total	4,883	100	271	100

Gender Diversity

Students

At the beginning of the 2000-2001 academic year, 89 percent of nursing students were women and 11 percent were men (Table 6). Although the design of the SREB survey does not permit comparisons with other findings, a report from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) showed that men accounted for 9 percent of students in bachelor's programs, 9.5 percent in master's programs and 6.1 percent in doctoral programs. (The AACN report did not include enrollment in associate's degree programs.)

The 2000-2001 graduates showed a similar pattern: 88 percent were women and 12 percent were men (Table 7). The AACN data for 1999-2000 show that men accounted for 9.6 percent of graduates from bachelor's programs, 8.3 percent of graduates from master's programs and 2.6 percent of graduates from doctoral programs.

Table 6

2000-2001 Enrollment by Gender

State	Men	Women
Alabama	257	2,754
Arkansas	113	1,039
Delaware	7	33
Florida	746	5,315
Georgia	155	1,597
Kentucky	67	840
Louisiana	542	2,883
Maryland	204	1,915
Mississippi	133	1,181
North Carolina	285	2,908
Oklahoma	104	933
South Carolina	83	1,462
Tennessee	420	2,444
Texas	867	4,695
Virginia	165	3,012
West Virginia	158	1,594
Total	**4,306**	**34,605**

Table 7

2000-2001 Graduates by Gender

State	Men	Women
Alabama	87	831
Arkansas	169	386
Delaware	1	11
Florida	326	2,458
Georgia	92	860
Kentucky	25	283
Louisiana	152	817
Maryland	79	750
Mississippi	50	434
North Carolina	106	1,091
Oklahoma	25	256
South Carolina	34	509
Tennessee	140	866
Texas	371	2,060
Virginia	74	898
West Virginia	59	589
Total	**1,790**	**13,099**

More than half (54 percent) of the nursing education units report no change in the gender distribution of students in the last five years. However, the percentage of NEUs reporting increases in the number of male students (35 percent) was more than three times greater than the percentage reporting decreases (11 percent) (Table 8).

Table 8

Change in Gender Distribution of Students at NEUs in Five Years

State	NEUs Reporting More Male Students	NEU's Reporting No Change	NEUs Reporting Fewer Male Students
Alabama	3	7	2
Arkansas	4	6	2
Delaware	1	0	0
Florida	12	6	3
Georgia	3	5	2
Kentucky	1	6	0
Louisiana	2	7	1
Maryland	2	2	1
Mississippi	3	3	2
North Carolina	17	13	1
Oklahoma	2	7	2
South Carolina	0	2	1
Tennessee	6	9	1
Texas	11	14	1
Virginia	4	7	1
West Virginia	4	7	0
Total	65	101	20

Faculty

At the beginning of the 2000-2001 academic year, only 5 percent of the nurse educators in the SREB survey were men (Table 9). Projections call for this percentage to remain unchanged in the 2001-2002 academic year (Table 10).

Nursing education units in the 16 SREB states mirror national trends. The AACN reports 96.5 percent of faculty nationally were women and 3.5 percent were men in 1999-2000.

Table 9

Gender Distribution of Faculty, Beginning of 2000-2001 Academic Year

State	Men	Women
Alabama	8	230
Arkansas	8	161
Delaware	1	7
Florida	23	411
Georgia	9	181
Kentucky	3	7
Louisiana	9	308
Maryland	17	212
Mississippi	10	215
North Carolina	10	263
Oklahoma	5	107
South Carolina	3	66
Tennessee	24	356
Texas	44	594
Virginia	5	221
West Virginia	8	210
Total	187	3,612

Table 10

Projected Gender Distribution of Faculty, 2001-2002 Academic Year

State	Men	Women
Alabama	7	243
Arkansas	6	162
Delaware	1	162
Florida	34	553
Georgia	17	172
Kentucky	3	80
Louisiana	10	298
Maryland	19	212
Mississippi	11	207
North Carolina	10	265
Oklahoma	4	96
South Carolina	2	59
Tennessee	26	363
Texas	40	612
Virginia	12	224
West Virginia	8	211
Total	210	3,919

The majority of the nursing education units (72 percent) experienced no change in the gender distribution of faculty in the last five years (Table 11). This percentage does not reveal, however, the level of gender diversity maintained in these nursing education programs. Among nursing education units that did experience changes, far more reported increases in the number of male faculty (19 percent) than reported decreases (9 percent).

Table 11

Change in Gender Distribution of Faculty at NEUs in Five Years

State	NEUs Reporting More Male Faculty	NEU's Reporting No Change	NEUs Reporting Fewer Male Faculty
Alabama	1	8	2
Arkansas	4	10	0
Delaware	0	1	0
Florida	4	13	3
Georgia	3	5	0
Kentucky	1	6	0
Louisiana	0	8	2
Maryland	2	3	0
Mississippi	1	6	1
North Carolina	2	18	2
Oklahoma	0	10	1
South Carolina	0	3	1
Tennessee	8	7	1
Texas	8	18	1
Virginia	3	8	1
West Virginia	0	10	1
Total	35	134	16

Recruitment and Retention Activities

Student Recruitment

Most nursing education units have recruitment partnerships with area high schools (Table 12). Other recruitment partnerships include student nurses associations, alumni associations, middle schools, junior high schools and churches. Several nursing education units listed partnerships with nursing organizations (such as Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority) or cultural/ethnic-specific nursing organizations (such as the Black Nurses Association and the Hispanic Nurses Association). Few nursing education units reported partnerships with youth organizations, such as Boys and Girls Clubs or the YWCA.

Table 12

NEUs' Partnerships to Recruit Students

Partnership(s)	NEUs With Partnership(s)
High schools	62
Student nurses associations	93
Alumni	89
Middle schools	78
Junior high schools	62
Other	47
Churches	44
Black Nurses Association	20
Association of Black Faculty	20
Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority	11
Hispanic Nurses Association	8
Boys and Girls Clubs	5
YWCA	2
YMCA	0

On the other hand, no institution reported a partnership with the YMCA. Nearly a fourth of the nursing education units reported "other" partnerships that were categorized into three major areas: civic organizations (fraternities, sororities and community groups); academic settings (universities, junior colleges, vocational/technical schools and practical nursing programs); and hospital settings.

Recruitment efforts included formal and informal activities by nurse educators and students. "Career Day" programs and health fairs were the most popular methods to recruit students. Only 17 percent of the nursing education units reported using "future nurses clubs" to recruit students.

Fifty-nine institutions listed other formal and informal recruitment activities, including advertisements on television and in newspapers, magazines and journals. These "other" activities also included participating in church conventions, tutoring and mentoring programs, community projects (immunization programs, outreach programs and health education programs), and charitable activities, such as walk-a-thons. The survey respondents also mentioned summer camps for high school students and campus tours. Nurse educators and students attended "Career Day" activities in high schools and area health education centers.

While partnerships with schools are useful in recruiting potential students and faculty, these efforts would be improved by including school counselors. Institutional representatives from nursing education could work with guidance counselors to develop educational plans that would help students select the right courses to prepare them for the rigorous requirements of the nursing curriculum. Recruitment activities need to start in elementary schools, where children should become familiar with nurses outside clinical settings, begin to appreciate the professional opportunities and begin to understand the skills required to study nursing in college.

Partnerships with racial/ethnic community groups or organizations outside of nursing — such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities — can boost recruitment and visibility in communities. Collaboration with these groups can help nursing education administrators identify prospective students and obtain financial assistance for students.

Student Retention

The survey participants used faculty advisers (81 percent), pre-admission orientation (64 percent), mentoring systems (49 percent) and academic support groups (48 percent) to help retain students. They also listed peer tutoring, study groups, summer sessions, special counseling and "an environment in which faculty are willing to listen to and understand students' perceptions."

The nursing education units relied heavily on faculty members' advising students and helping them become familiar with the program and campus before they enroll in the program. Academic support services provided by the institution — such as writing labs and English as a Second Language programs — were not used extensively. Nurse educators should encourage their institutions to develop these services or form partnerships with other institutions that provide them.

Faculty Recruitment

The nursing education units use various strategies to recruit racial/ethnic minorities and men as faculty members. Most activities concentrated on contacts in local communities, such as recruitment for faculty among undergraduate students and partnerships with graduate programs. Only four survey respondents reported faculty recruitment among racial/ethnic organizations.

More than half of the responses listed as "other" included advertisements — particularly in newspapers and in journals geared toward minorities. Several survey respondents reported recruiting through community involvement — such as clinical relationships, contacts with minority nurses who are potential faculty members, and faculty participation in community activities that increase their visibility to prospective faculty. Another strategy was to develop relationships with promising graduate students by providing scholarships, offering mentoring sessions, appointing them to advisory councils or task forces, and giving them positive experiences with nurse educators. Such opportunities can encourage these students to consider teaching.

Faculty Retention

Most nursing education units (72 percent) reported using opportunities for professional growth to retain faculty members who represented racial/ethnic minorities. More than half (65 percent) said they work to maintain hospitable work environments and mentoring systems with senior faculty members. Activities reported less frequently included providing release time for faculty to develop research plans and providing faculty with scholarship assistance for continued study.

External Funding

Nursing education units reported receiving external funding from federal, state, local and private sources to support recruitment and retention strategies in the last five years. Nearly half (43 percent) of the external sources reported were federal (Table 13).

Table 13

NEUs' External Funding in the Last Five Years

Source	NEUs Reporting External Funding	Percent
Local	7	17.5
State	4	10.0
Federal	17	42.5
Private foundations	12	30.0
Total	40	100

Note: Some institutions may have reported more than one type of external funding.

Of the 46 active federally funded projects in nursing that relate specifically to diversity in the work force (http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/dn/grantsag.htm), 43 percent are in the SREB states (Table 14). Five were awarded to three historically black colleges and universities.

Table 14

Active Grant Projects Related to Diversity in the Work Force, SREB States

State	Number of Grants to NEUs	Percent of Region's Grants
Arkansas	2	10
Delaware	1	5
Florida	1	5
Georgia	3	15
Maryland	1	5
North Carolina	2	10
South Carolina	1	5
Tennessee	2	10
Texas	3	15
Virginia	4	20
Total	20	100

Summary

While nursing education units employ many strategies to recruit students, selecting and concentrating on the most successful activities can ensure positive results. A study of the effectiveness of the most frequently reported activities used to recruit racial/ethnic minorities — Career Days and health fairs — would benefit all programs. The study might include a review of posters, pamphlets and other handouts used in recruiting activities to determine whether they reflect the community's racial/ethnic makeup. The study also could determine whether advertisements appear in magazines or on radio and television stations that appeal to certain age or racial/ethnic groups.

Most written comments did not offer great insight about new strategies to retain faculty. The retention strategies listed primarily included opportunities for professional development and further study (support for doctoral study, scholarship support and release time for doctoral study). Some comments emphasized the importance of mentoring by the nursing education administrator and senior faculty members. Nursing education units also reported incentives such as faculty practice and nine-month contracts.

The findings of this study represent recruitment and retention activities in the 16 SREB states. Other disciplines are using the same or similar strategies. None has been particularly successful. Recruitment of faculty of diverse racial/ethnic groups must begin with recruitment of more racial/ethnic minorities into baccalaureate programs, which is the first step toward producing more qualified candidates to be nurse educators.

Nurse educators in the SREB states and the District of Columbia can build upon efforts that have produced good results for SREB states. Many respondents to the questionnaire emphasized the need for increased funds to support activities to recruit and retain students and faculty. They suggested sharing success stories and strategies through conferences, publications and exchange programs among nursing education programs.

The SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing will promote the goals identified in *A National Agenda for Nursing Workforce Racial/Ethnic Diversity* (2000) by the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice as part of regional efforts to increase racial/ethnic and gender diversity.

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